12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4



511
735 by. It was only the occasional stranger who offered him any pos-
792 sible opportunity to make a cash profit.

[642] The poverty and ignorance in which the lamas hold the people
518 of this region mean that the lamas are supreme in temporal as
• 522 well as in spiritual matters. There is no revolt, not even any apparent resentment. Yet people are people the world around; and the Ladakhis show their resentment in simple, innocuous ways. It is in the form of making fun of the lamas. And one of the most dramatic ways is in the singing of a famous Ladakhi folk song.

[291] The women of Gya sang it for me. A dozen or more stood in line, close together. They were dressed in their conventional long black wool dresses. Most of them had on the picturesque *perakh*,[1] and the large black wool earpieces that stood out like sails from their heads. Most of them wore sheepskins over their shoulders—the skin that serves as a ground covering at night, a protection against rain by day, and a shield for the carrying of loads on the back. They were giggling as they started to sing; and the giggles interfered with the song until at last they finally settled to a
578 serious rendition. The song is a take-off on a man accused of be-
522 ing a lama. The man's name is Tashiwangyal, and he is the singer.
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539

*Don't think I have no father;*[1]
*My father's caste is bright like sandalwood.*[2]
*Don't think I have no mother;*
*I'm like the guitar made out of the reindeer skin.*[3]
*Don't think I have no tongue;*
*I'm like the cord made of the inner skin of the goat.*[4]
*Don't think I am a lama;*
*Thang Thang Gyalpo is my lama.*[5]•

[1]A lama is supposed to renounce his father and mother.
[2]He is, in other words, spotless.
[3]He's made of proper stuff.
[4]This skin has a fine texture.
[5]He was a very superior man who built a lot of monasteries.
•See page 334.

 7 [Headdress of older women -- Analyst]

12: Douglas T-3 (1951)1953 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4



As the women sang, they bent over until their backs were almost parallel to the ground. They shook their fingers at an imaginary figure at their feet as if they were scolding. As they pretended to scold, they swayed back and forth. And as they sang and swayed, their eyes danced with merriment. For now they were making fun of their lord and master—the one who owns their souls, their houses, their menfolk, their babies, their fields—the big rich monastery that sits like a castle on the hill.

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir
W. Tibetans AJ 4



green cultivation. Then the welcome halting place—a rest house for lunch, a famous monastery some hundred years old, a ruined castle as usual, and a further three miles on to a most picturesque monastery which is five hundred years old, and the entrance to the Leh valley. Here we left the river Indus, to make the gradual ascent over the now better road to Leh, which we could see some four miles in the distance, and which I must admit did not thrill me as we made towards it; we had passed on the way so many beautiful places that I expected to discover in Leh the jewel of them all. As we neared it we could make out on the hill the great, one hundred roomed palace of the ancient kings of Ladakh, and above that the enormous—in their spread—buildings of the monastery, and were duly impressed, though not overawed, for everything seems to be of the same earth stone colour, as though the buildings, which could be made in miniature with a child's box of bricks, have risen from the rocks like the commencement of an eruption which changed its mind, just as we had seen so many of them on our way, now decaying back to from whence they came.

But Leh is an important place, not only is it the capital of Ladakh, but it is also—and to the people of the country this is far more important—the religious capital of Western Tibet, besides being a great centre for caravans passing to and from Central Asia, the entrepôt of trade between India on the south, and Yarkand, Khotan and Tibet on the north and east. Here in the great bazaar which is held in the September month of each year. Traders from Turkistan, Siberia, Tibet and other parts of Central Asia come to buy, sell and barter their merchandise with those who have come from Kashmir and India, so that we found people of all races and religions there with Buddhism predominating, and a sprinkling of Mohammedans; a Moravian Mission is there also, and among the people are to be found numbers of Mohammedan half-castes known as Arghons; they are the offsprings of visiting traders and the women of the land "with whom they have made a temporary marriage".

The Ladakhis are Mongolian in features. Their ugly faces are soon forgotten though, since they possess a pronounced sense of humour and are always laughing, although their dirty stubby teeth then seen are not an enhancement to their beauty. Very